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Letter dated 12 September 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that on 22 September 2011, the Security Council will hold a high-level meeting on preventive diplomacy, under the item "Maintenance of international peace and security". The meeting will be chaired by the President of the Republic of Lebanon, H.E. General Michel Sleiman.

With a view to facilitating the exchange of views during that meeting, I transmit herewith a concept paper entitled "Strengthening and consolidating preventive diplomacy" (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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[Original: Arabic]

Concept paper

Strengthening and consolidating preventive diplomacy

The idea of preventive diplomacy is rooted in the purposes and principles of the United Nations, which are defined in the Charter of the United Nations, Article 1, paragraph 1, as follows: "to maintain peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace". The Charter confers on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Furthermore, Article 99 of the Charter stipulates that the Secretary-General "may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security". Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter articulate the principles of the pacific settlement of disputes and the importance of regional arrangements.

The late Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld pioneered the development of the concept of preventive diplomacy and its role within the United Nations system. His successors followed suit and expanded on the need of the United Nations to move from "a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention". In his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping" (A/47/277-S/24111), former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined preventive diplomacy as "action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur".

The General Assembly has, for its part, adopted milestone resolutions, namely, 37/10 of 15 November 1982, entitled "Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes"; 47/120 A of 18 December 1992, entitled "An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy and related matters"; 47/120 B of 20 September 1993, entitled "An Agenda for Peace"; and 51/242 of 15 September 1997, entitled "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace".

Furthermore, in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) of 8 September 2000, the Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment "to make the United Nations more effective in maintaining peace and security by giving it the resources and tools it needs for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction". To that end, the General Assembly has adopted important resolutions on the prevention of armed conflict, namely, resolutions 55/281 of 1 August 2001; 56/512 of 9 September 2002; and 57/337 of 3 July 2003.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1), the Heads of State renewed their pledge "to promote a culture of prevention of armed conflict as a means of effectively addressing the interconnected security and development challenges faced by peoples throughout the world, as well as to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations for the prevention of armed conflicts". In that context, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 60/284 of 7 September 2006, entitled "Prevention of armed conflict", and 65/283 of 22 June 2011, entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution".

As for the Security Council, it has advanced the question of preventive diplomacy in numerous resolutions, most notably resolutions 1170 (1998) of 28 May 1998; 1197 (1998) of 18 September 1998; 1318 (2000) of 7 September 2000; 1366 (2001) of 30 August 2001; 1625 (2005) of 14 September 2005; and 1631 (2005) of 17 October 2005. Furthermore, in resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, the Council stressed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding; and in resolution 1809 (2008) of 16 April 2008, it emphasized the need to enhance cooperation between United Nations and regional organizations, including for the purposes of conflict prevention.

In addition, the Security Council adopted the following relevant presidential statements: S/PRST/1999/34 of 30 November 1999; S/PRST/2000/25 of 20 July 2000; S/PRST/2007/31 of 28 August 2007; S/PRST/2009/8 of 21 April 2009; S/PRST/2010/14 of 16 July 2010; and S/PRST/2010/18 of 23 September 2010.

The Security Council has continued to hone its tools for addressing the root causes of conflict, and to highlight the interrelationship between political processes, security, human rights, the rule of law and development. In this context, the Council has held several briefings and thematic debates, including the debate held at the initiative of Lebanon in May 2010 on "Intercultural Dialogue for Peace and Security", as an instrument of preventive diplomacy, conflict management and resolution, and peacebuilding. It is also worth noting that in various thematic debates held in 2011, the Council highlighted the importance of preventive diplomacy, while addressing the need to build institutions in post-conflict situations, the interdependence between security and development, and the potential impact of climate change.

As a result of those efforts, the United Nations currently has at its disposal in the field of conflict prevention a significant array of assets, including the Secretary-General's good offices, envoys, early warning systems, resident political missions, United Nations country teams, "horizon scanning" briefings, the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, regional offices, peacekeeping operations, groups of friends and other diplomatic support, and fact-finding missions, inquiries, and investigations.

As requested by the Security Council in its presidential statement 2010/18 of 16 July 2010, the Secretary-General presented a report entitled "Preventive diplomacy: delivering results" (S/2011/552), in which he addressed "innovations and evolving practices of recent years, the tools at our disposal, and the main challenges that we continue to face".

Lebanon would like to capitalize on this momentum and further the debate by putting to the members of the Security Council the following questions:

1. How can the Security Council strengthen its role in preventive diplomacy?

2. How can the sources of tension and potential conflict be more readily identified and acted upon?

3. How can peacekeeping missions be built on in order to mitigate the effects of conflicts and prevent their spread?

4. How can the work of the Peacebuilding Commission be developed with a view to better addressing the root causes of conflicts and preventing their resurgence?

5. How can the consistency of the various United Nations actors involved in preventive diplomacy be improved, thereby enabling the international community to act swiftly?

6. How can partnerships between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations be strengthened in the field of conflict prevention?

7. How can engagement with such actors as civil society organizations and, in particular, women, youth and elders' groups, think tanks, academia, the media and the business community be improved in order to enhance preventive diplomacy efforts?

8. How can the requirements of preventive diplomacy be reconciled with the prerogatives of State sovereignty when they appear to conflict?